

news & notes

National Museum of the United States Air Force • Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio • www.wpafb.af.mil/museum • June 2006

news briefs

Vietnam POW exhibit opens at museum

Visitors will get a rare glimpse into the lives of prisoners of war through a dramatic new exhibit in the museum's Modern Flight Gallery. The exhibit, titled "Return with Honor: American Prisoners of War in Southeast Asia," leads visitors through the shootdown, imprisonment and homecoming of American POWs.

For additional information, see <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/pa/nr06066.htm>.



The Vietnam POW exhibit opened in May. (U.S. Air Force photo by Jeff Fisher)

Park at museum, ride to Dayton Air Show

Visitors are encouraged to park at the museum and ride the Miami Valley RTA bus to the Dayton Air Show on July 29-30. Continuous service runs from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. A round-trip ticket costs \$3, and children under age 6 ride free.

The museum will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both days. More information about the Dayton Air Show is available at <http://www.daytonairshow.com>.

Military Tattoo features flyovers, fireworks

Mark your calendars for the second annual Freedom's Call Military Tattoo, which will take place at the National Museum of the United States Air Force on June 30. Hosted by Air Force Materiel Command, this year's Tattoo focuses on current Air Force capabilities and modern aircraft. Activities include aircraft flyovers, performances by the U.S. Air Force Band of Flight and a fireworks show in celebration of Independence Day.

This free event is open to the public. All activities take place on the



museum's rear field, and spectators are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets.

Gates will open at 5:30 p.m., and pre-show entertainment is planned. Vendors selling food and drinks will be on site.

More information is available online at <http://tattoo.wpafb.af.mil/>.

XC-99 continues journey from Texas to museum

For the past two years, the only XC-99 ever built has been arriving at the museum, piece by piece.

Disassembling of the aircraft began in January 2004, with parts being airlifted to the museum from the Kelly Annex of Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. In recent months, Worldwide Aircraft Recovery has removed the top cabin sections. This summer, the wings will be removed and delivered to the museum. The remaining fuselage sections will arrive at a later date.

In 1942 the U.S. Army Air Forces wanted a long-range aircraft capable of carrying large numbers of troops or cargo. Consolidated Aircraft Corp. (later Convair) proposed adapting

their XB-36 bomber, which was still under development, to fit the AAF's requirements. The XB-36 made its first flight in August 1946, and the XC-99 made its first flight a year later on Nov. 24, 1947. Its first cargo run was into Kelly Air Force Base on July 14, 1950.

The aircraft's propellers were mounted on the trailing edge of the wings to reduce drag, thereby increasing the aircraft's range. Neither the B-36 nor the XC-99 had in-flight refueling capabilities.

During its service, the XC-99 logged more than 7,400 hours of flying time and moved more than 60 million pounds of cargo. The XC-99 made its final flight on March 19, 1957.



The only XC-99 ever built will eventually be displayed at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. Parts of the aircraft have been arriving at the museum from Texas since early 2004. (U.S. Air Force photo)

now showing

Summer show schedule for IMAX® Theatre

Schedule good June 3 through Sept. 3, 2006. For more information, visit www.afmuseum.com/imax.

Straight Up: Helicopters in Action: Shown at 11 a.m. daily.

Fighter Pilot: Operation Red Flag: Shown at noon, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. daily.

The Magic of Flight: Shown at 1 p.m. daily.

Space Station: Shown at 3 p.m. daily.

Volcanoes of the Deep Sea: Shown at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. daily.

Cosmic Voyage: Shown at 6 p.m. daily.

on the radar

Through July • “Disney Pins on Wings” art exhibit

June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 • Behind the Scenes Tours

June 17 • Family Day

June 30 • Freedom’s Call Military Tattoo

July 7, 14, 21, 28 • Behind the Scenes Tours

July 15 • Family Day

July 29-30 • Dayton Air Show

For a complete list of museum events, please visit <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/pa/06events.pdf>.

Thor Agena placed on display in Missile Gallery

One of the most successful U.S. satellite launch vehicles of the Cold War era, the Thor Agena A, recently was added to the museum’s Missile and Space Gallery. It is the fifth of 10 vehicles to be added to the gallery.

The U.S. Air Force launched the world’s first space photo reconnaissance satellites using rockets like the Thor Agena A. These satellites, secretly code-named Corona, took pictures of the Soviet Union’s bomber and missile bases during the Cold War. The U.S. Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency jointly managed Corona, which was known to the public as the Discoverer research satellite program.



The Thor Agena is displayed in the Missile & Space Gallery. (U.S. Air Force photo by Jeff Fisher)

The Thor Agena A launch vehicle combined a Thor ballistic missile with an Agena upper stage. At first, the Agena vehicle was meant to be carried atop Atlas boosters, but the 1957 Soviet launch of Sputnik sped up the U.S. Discoverer program. Thor was the first vehicle available to carry Agenas.

Thor and Agena vehicles worked together to put satellites into orbit. The Thor first stage launched the Agena and its satellite payload into a low orbit. Then the Agena boosted the satellite into its final, higher orbit. The Thor-

Agena combination was able to put Corona satellites into elliptical orbits that ranged as far as 1,049 miles and as close as 61 miles to the earth.

Restoration update: Work continues on Memphis Belle

The restoration staff is currently working on the following projects:

B-17F Memphis Belle: The volunteer staff is restoring the radial engines. The aft tail section has been stripped of interior parts, and sheet metal repairs were started. The outside of the aft tail section has been stripped of paint, and the staff discovered names that had been scratched into the metal during the *Memphis Belle* war bond tour. The upper turret was dismantled and cleaned, and reassembly has started with the missing items that have been obtained. The vertical stabilizer has been stripped of paint and needed repairs have been noted.

Bristol Beaufighter: The staff is hand-fabricating from blueprints all brackets for landing gear doors and mechanisms. They also are constructing wing ammo bay doors and hand-made missing wing

inspection fairings and panels. The Beaufighter should be on display in the museum later this year.

C-141 Hanoi Taxi: The aircraft is being prepared for public display in the Air Park this summer.

Information on additional projects is available at <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/res/restore.htm>.

Visitors can see the restoration facility by signing up for the museum’s Behind the Scenes tour. Please call (937) 255-3286, Ext. 302 or 303, for information.



The Bristol Beaufighter is currently undergoing restoration. (U.S. Air Force photo by Jeff Fisher)